

The Halted Spy Flights Two Days Before Trip

From News Dispatches

It was disclosed in Paris yesterday after the Big Four meeting that President Eisenhower had canceled all high-altitude U-2 espionage flights over Russia last Thursday, two days before he left Washington for the Summit Conference.

The order was issued to Secretary of Defense Thomas S. Gates, Jr. and to Gen. Nathan Twining, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary of State Christian Herter was informed.

The informants said that Mr. Eisenhower had decided not to make this decision public until yesterday in order not to tip his hand on Summit strategy.

In Washington, a Congressman who had been informed by the Administration of back-stage developments said he had never been told of the decision.

Russia announced on May 5 that it had shot down a U. S. plane on May 1. During the next few days the United States first denied and later admitted the plane was on a spying mission.

Since then no United States official has said outright that the flights would be continued. But statements by the President and other Government leaders carried the strong implication they would go on. Today, Mr. Eisenhower said the flights would not be resumed.

Here is a summary of statements on the subject:

The WFO, if true, exactly a week ago, denied as "not true" a report that the President had suspended U-2 flights over or near Communist borders pending a tip-off investigation. The United States espionage network.

Secretary of State Christian A. Herter issued a statement the day which was widely to mean that the flights would continue over Russia's protest.

Someone in the Administration challenged this interpretation of the statement until yesterday, May 6, when

George V. Allen of the United States Information Agency, said in a TV interview that such implications were not correct.

The President's news conference last Wednesday that flights over Russia were part of a distasteful but vital intelligence system designed to prevent "another Pearl Harbor."

Herter's statement on the U-2 plane incident contained this paragraph:

"The Government of the United States would be derelict to its responsibility not only to the American people but to free peoples everywhere if it did not, in the absence of Soviet cooperation, take such measures as are possible unilaterally to lessen and to overcome this danger of surprise attack. In fact, the United States has not and does not shirk this responsibility."

Practically every news report of Herter's remarks said he had indicated the U-2 flights would continue until the Soviets agreed to safeguards against surprise attack.

The President, in his news conference, read a 200-word statement which said "intelligence-gathering activities" are essential to safeguard the nation "against another Pearl Harbor" and that he had authorized gathering of such information "in every feasible way."

He mentioned Herter's previous statement on the issue and did not challenge any of the interpretations put upon it.

But Sunday, Allen said during the TV program that there had been "a great misunderstanding" about Herter's statement which he wanted to correct.

The Secretary, he said, had noted "an obligation and responsibility on the part of the United States Government and the Free World to try to obtain information to guard against further attack."

"He has not said we are going to continue to fly."

When Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev charged at the Summit meeting in Paris yesterday that the United States had threatened continued flights over Russia, the President said the Soviet leader was under "an evident misapprehension."

"The United States has made no such threat," he said. "In point of fact, these flights were suspended after the recent incident and are not to be resumed."

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